

A METHOD FOR THE PRODUCTION OF LOW DEFECT DENSITY SILICON

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority from U.S. provisional application, Serial No. 60/252,715, filed November 22, 2000
5 U.S. provisional application, Serial No. 60/245,610, filed November 3, 2000.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to the preparation of semiconductor grade single crystal silicon
10 which is used in the manufacture of electronic components. More particularly, the present invention relates to a process for producing a single crystal silicon ingot by the Czochralski method, a substantial portion of which is substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects,
15 wherein the crystal growth conditions are varied to initially create alternating regions of silicon self-interstitial dominated material and vacancy dominated material within the constant diameter portion of the ingot. The regions of vacancy dominated material act as sinks to
20 which self-interstitials may diffuse and be annihilated.

Single crystal silicon, which is the starting material for most processes for the fabrication of semiconductor electronic components, is commonly prepared by the so-called Czochralski ("Cz") method. In this method, polycrystalline
25 silicon ("polysilicon") is charged to a crucible and melted, a seed crystal is brought into contact with the molten silicon and a single crystal is grown by slow extraction. After formation of a neck is complete, the diameter of the crystal is enlarged by decreasing the pulling rate and/or
30 the melt temperature until the desired or target diameter is reached. The cylindrical main body of the crystal which has an approximately constant diameter is then grown by controlling the growth rate and the melt temperature while

compensating for the decreasing melt level. Near the end of the growth process but before the crucible is emptied of molten silicon, the crystal diameter is reduced gradually to form an end-cone. Typically, the end-cone is formed by 5 increasing the crystal growth rate and heat supplied to the crucible. When the diameter becomes small enough, the crystal is then separated from the melt.

In recent years, it has been recognized that a number of defects in single crystal silicon form in the crystal 10 growth chamber as the crystal cools after solidification. Such defects arise, in part, due to the presence of an excess (i.e. a concentration above the solubility limit) of intrinsic point defects, which are known as vacancies and self-interstitials. Silicon crystals grown from a melt are 15 typically grown with an excess of one or the other type of intrinsic point defect, either crystal lattice vacancies ("V") or silicon self-interstitials ("I"). It has been suggested that the type and initial concentration of these 20 point defects in the silicon are determined at the time of solidification and, if these concentrations reach a level of critical supersaturation in the system and the mobility of the point defects is sufficiently high, a reaction, or an agglomeration event, will likely occur. Agglomerated intrinsic point defects in silicon can severely impact the 25 yield potential of the material in the production of complex and highly integrated circuits.

Vacancy-type defects are recognized to be the origin of such observable crystal defects as D-defects, Flow Pattern Defects (FPDs), Gate Oxide Integrity (GOI) Defects, Crystal 30 Originated Particle (COP) Defects, crystal originated Light Point Defects (LPDs), as well as certain classes of bulk defects observed by infrared light scattering techniques such as Scanning Infrared Microscopy and Laser Scanning Tomography. Also present in regions of excess vacancies are 35 defects which act as the nuclei for ring oxidation induced stacking faults (OISF). It is speculated that this

particular defect is a high temperature nucleated oxygen agglomerate catalyzed by the presence of excess vacancies.

Defects relating to self-interstitials are less well studied. They are generally regarded as being low densities 5 of interstitial-type dislocation loops or networks. Such defects are not responsible for gate oxide integrity failures, an important wafer performance criterion, but they are widely recognized to be the cause of other types of device failures usually associated with current leakage 10 problems.

The density of such vacancy and self-interstitial agglomerated defects in Czochralski silicon is conventionally within the range of about $1*10^3/\text{cm}^3$ to about $1*10^7/\text{cm}^3$. While these values are relatively low, 15 agglomerated intrinsic point defects are of rapidly increasing importance to device manufacturers and, in fact, are now seen as yield-limiting factors in device fabrication processes.

One approach which has been suggested to control the 20 formation of agglomerated defects is to control the initial concentration of the point defects when the single crystal silicon is formed upon solidification from a molten silicon mass by controlling the growth rate (v) of the single crystal silicon ingot from the molten silicon mass, wherein 25 higher growth rates tend to produce vacancy rich material and lower growth rates tend to produce interstitial rich material, and controlling the axial temperature gradient, G , in the vicinity of the solid-liquid interface of the growing crystal for a given temperature gradient. In particular, it 30 has been suggested that the radial variation of the axial temperature gradient be no greater than $5\text{ }^\circ\text{C/cm}$. or less. See, e.g., Iida et al., EP0890662. This approach, however, requires rigorous design and control of the hot zone of a crystal puller.

35 Another approach which has been suggested to control the formation of agglomerated defects is to control the

initial concentration of vacancy or interstitial point defects when the single crystal silicon is formed upon solidification from a molten silicon mass and controlling the cooling rate of the crystal from the temperature of 5 solidification to a temperature of about 1,050 °C to permit the radial diffusion of silicon self-interstitial atoms or vacancies towards the lateral surface of the ingot or towards each other causing recombination thereby suppressing the concentration of intrinsic point defects to maintain the 10 supersaturation of the vacancy system or the interstitial system at values which are less than those at which agglomeration reactions occur. See, for example, Falster et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,919,302 and Falster et al., WO 98/45509. While these approaches may be successfully used 15 to prepare single crystal silicon which is substantially free of agglomerated vacancy or interstitial defects, significant time may be required to allow for adequate diffusion of vacancies and interstitials. This may have the effect of reducing the throughput for the crystal puller.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Among the several objects and features of the present invention may be noted a process for producing a single crystal silicon ingot, a significant portion of which is 25 substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects which negatively impact the semiconductor properties of the silicon; the provision of a process for producing a single crystal silicon ingot having alternating regions of vacancy dominated and silicon self-interstitial dominated regions 30 said silicon self-interstitial dominated regions being substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects; the provision of such a process which does not substantially diminish the throughput of the crystal puller; the provision of such a process which substantially reduces the crystal 35 puller from limitations on growth rate; the provision of such a process which substantial reduces the crystal puller

from limitations on the average axial temperature gradient G_0 ; and the provision of a method for sorting the wafers sliced from said single crystal silicon ingot such that wafers which are substantially free of agglomerated
5 intrinsic defects may be visually identified.

Briefly, therefore, the present invention is directed to a process for the preparation of a silicon single crystal ingot, a substantial portion of which is substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects. The process
10 comprising the controlling a growth velocity, v , and an average axial temperature gradient, G_0 , such that the ratio of v/G_0 is varied to initially produce in the constant diameter portion of the ingot two or more regions, in which crystal lattice vacancies are the predominant intrinsic
15 point defect, separated along the axis by one or more regions, in which silicon self-interstitial atoms are the predominant intrinsic point defect. The regions in which crystal lattice vacancies are initially the predominant intrinsic point defects have an axial length, $L_{vac.}$, and a
20 radius, $R_{vac.}$, extending from the axis of the ingot towards the lateral surface which is at least about 10 % of the radius, R , of the constant diameter portion of the crystal. The region(s) in which silicon self-interstitial atoms are initially the predominant intrinsic point defects have an
25 axial length of $L_{int.}$ and extend across the entire radius, R , of the constant diameter portion of the silicon single crystal. The regions are cooled from the temperature of solidification at a rate which allows silicon self-
interstitial atoms and vacancies from the regions to diffuse
30 and recombine to reduce the concentration of silicon self-
interstitial atoms in the region(s) in which silicon self-
interstitial atoms were initially the predominant intrinsic point defect and to reduce the concentration of crystal lattice vacancies in the region(s) in which crystal lattice
35 vacancies were initially the predominant intrinsic point defect.

The present invention is further directed to a process for the preparation of a silicon single crystal ingot, a substantial portion of which is substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects. The process

5 comprising controlling a growth velocity, v , to initially produce in the constant diameter portion of the ingot two or more regions, in which crystal lattice vacancies are the predominant intrinsic point defect, separated along the axis by one or more regions, in which silicon self-interstitial

10 atoms are the predominant intrinsic point defect. The regions in which crystal lattice vacancies are initially the predominant intrinsic point defects have an axial length, $L_{vac.}$, and a radius, $R_{vac.}$, extending from the axis of the ingot towards the lateral surface which is at least about 10

15 % of the radius, R , of the constant diameter portion of the crystal. The region(s) in which silicon self-interstitial atoms are initially the predominant intrinsic point defects have an axial length of $L_{int.}$ and extend across the entire radius, R , of the constant diameter portion of the silicon

20 single crystal. The regions are cooled from the temperature of solidification at a rate which allows silicon self-interstitial atoms and vacancies from the regions to diffuse and recombine to reduce the concentration of silicon self-interstitial atoms in the region(s) in which silicon self-

25 interstitial atoms were initially the predominant intrinsic point defect and to reduce the concentration of crystal lattice vacancies in the region(s) in which crystal lattice vacancies were initially the predominant intrinsic point defect.

30 The present invention is further directed to a single crystal silicon ingot having a constant diameter portion comprising multiple axially symmetric regions alternating along the axis of the ingot between a region wherein vacancies are the predominant intrinsic point defect and a

35 region wherein interstitials are the predominant intrinsic point defect, said ingot having at least 2 interstitial

dominant regions which are substantially free of agglomerated interstitial defects separated by a vacancy dominant region along the axis of the constant diameter portion of the ingot

- 5 Other objects and features of this invention will be in part apparent and in part pointed out hereinafter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a graph which shows an example of how the initial concentration of self-interstitials, [I], and 10 vacancies, [V], changes with an increase in the value of the ratio v/G_0 , where v is the growth velocity and G_0 is the average axial temperature gradient.

FIG. 2 is a graph which shows an example of how ΔG_I , the change in free energy required for the formation of 15 agglomerated interstitial defects, increases as the temperature, T, decreases, for a given initial concentration of self-interstitials, [I].

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional image of an ingot prepared by quench cooling the ingot through the temperature range at 20 which agglomerated intrinsic point defects nucleate.

FIG. 4 is an image comparing a wafer having B-defects before being subjected to a B-defect annihilation heat-treatment to a wafer having B-defects which was subjected to a B-defect annihilation heat-treatment.

25 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Based upon experimental evidence to date, the type and initial concentration of intrinsic point defects appears to be initially determined as the ingot cools from the temperature of solidification (i.e., about 1410 °C) to a 30 temperature greater than 1300 °C (i.e., at least about 1325 °C, at least about 1350 °C or even at least about 1375 °C). That is, the type and initial concentration of these defects are controlled by the ratio v/G_0 , where v is

the growth velocity and G_0 is the average axial temperature gradient over this temperature range.

The transition between vacancy and interstitial dominated material occurs at a critical value of v/G_0 which, 5 based upon currently available information, appears to be about $2.1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ cm}^2/\text{sK}$ where G_0 is determined under conditions in which the axial temperature gradient is constant within the temperature range defined above. At this critical value, the resulting concentrations of these intrinsic point 10 defects are equal. If the value of v/G_0 exceeds the critical value, vacancies are the predominant intrinsic point defect and the concentration of vacancies increases with increasing v/G_0 . If the value of v/G_0 is less than the critical value, silicon self-interstitials are the predominant intrinsic 15 point defect and the concentration of silicon self-interstitials increases with decreasing v/G_0 .

The ratio of v/G_0 , and therefore the type of intrinsic point defect initially predominant in a particular region may be controlled by controlling the temperature gradient, 20 G_0 , the growth rate v , or by controlling both G_0 and v .

Preferably, however, the ratio of v/G_0 is controlled by controlling the growth rate v . For a given G_0 , therefore, a decrease in the growth rate, v , tends to increase the concentration of silicon self-interstitials and an increase 25 in the growth rate, v , tends to increase the concentration of vacancies.

Once the initial concentration of an intrinsic point defects is established, the formation of agglomerated defects is thought to be dependent upon the free energy of 30 the system. For a given concentration of intrinsic point defects a decrease in temperature yields an increase in the change in free energy for the reaction which forms agglomerated defects from the intrinsic point defects. Thus, as a region containing a concentration of vacancies or 35 interstitials cools from the temperature of solidification through the temperature at which agglomerated defects are

nucleated, the energy barrier for the formation of agglomerated vacancy or interstitial defects is approached. As cooling continues, this energy barrier may eventually be exceeded, at which point an agglomeration reaction occurs
5 (See, e.g., Falster et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,919,302 and Falster et al., WO 98/45509).

The temperature at which nucleation of agglomerated defects occurs, i.e. the temperature of agglomeration, T_A , is dependent upon the concentration and type of predominant
10 intrinsic point defects (vacancy or silicon self-interstitial). In general, the temperature of agglomeration, T_A , increases with increasing concentration of intrinsic point defect. In addition, the range of nucleation temperatures for agglomerated vacancy-type
15 defects is somewhat greater than the range of nucleation temperatures for agglomerated interstitial-type defects; stated another way, over the range of vacancy concentrations typically produced in Czochralski grown single crystal silicon the temperature of agglomeration, T_A , for
20 agglomerated vacancy defects is generally between about 1,000 °C and about 1,200 °C and typically between about 1,000 °C and about 1,100 °C whereas over the range of silicon self-interstitial concentrations typically produced in Czochralski grown single crystal silicon, the temperature
25 of agglomeration, T_A , is generally between about 850 °C and about 1,100 °C and typically between about 870 °C and about 970 °C.

The concentration of vacancies or interstitials may be suppressed, however by allowing the ingot to remain above
30 the temperature of agglomeration, T_A , for a time period sufficient to allow the vacancies or interstitials to diffuse radially to the surface of the ingot. However, large diameter ingots require substantial time periods for
35 vacancies or interstitials located at the axis of the ingot to diffuse to the surface.

Ingots comprising concentrically positioned regions of vacancies and regions of interstitials, provide an additional mechanism for reducing the concentration of vacancies and interstitials, wherein the ingot may be maintained above the temperature of agglomeration, T_A , for a time period sufficient to allow the vacancies and interstitials to diffuse radially towards each other such that they recombine and are mutually annihilated.

In accordance with the present invention, at least a significant fraction of the constant diameter portion of the ingot may be grown substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects by controlling the growth conditions to initially produce in the constant diameter portion of the ingot, separated regions along the axis having alternating predominant intrinsic point defects. Stated another way, the predominant intrinsic point defect alternates between vacancy dominated regions and silicon self-interstitial dominated regions along the axis of the constant diameter portion of the ingot. As a result, vacancies and interstitials located near the axis may diffuse axially towards each other and recombine while intrinsic point defects near the lateral surface can diffuse radially towards the surface, thus utilizing both radial and axial diffusion to suppress the concentration of intrinsic point defects. Because interstitials diffuse at much faster rates than vacancies, the interstitials will travel a much further distance than the vacancies prior to the recombination. As a practical matter, therefore, it is preferred that the constant diameter portion of the ingot initially comprise relatively larger regions of silicon self-interstitial dominated regions separated by relatively smaller vacancy dominated regions having a high concentration of vacancies. The vacancy dominated regions thus serve as sinks for the rapidly diffusing silicon self interstitials where they are annihilated to suppress the concentration of silicon self-

interstitials prior to cooling below the temperature of agglomeration.

Without being held to a particular theory, it is believed that, the out-diffusion of silicon self interstitials from an interstitial dominated region located axially between two vacancy dominated regions may be described by modeling the concentration field of interstitials. Accordingly, the concentration of interstitials can be described by as a function of time by expanding the interstitial concentration field $C_i(r,z,t)$ into a series of eigenfunctions wherein each such function is a product of the Bessel function $J_o(\lambda r/R)$ for the radial concentration profile and of the sinusoidal function $\sin(\mu z/L)$ for the axial concentration profile and wherein λ and μ are the roots of those two functions, at a distance (r) equal to the radius (R) of the region, and at a distance (z) along the axis equal to the length (L) of the region. Deep decay in the concentration implies that only the first term of the series is relevant such that:

$$20 \quad C_i/C_m = A J_o(\lambda r/R) \sin(\pi z/L) \exp(-t/\tau) \quad (2)$$

with $\lambda=2.4048$, wherein C_m is the melting point equilibrium concentration and the ratio C_i/C_m represents the normalized interstitial concentration. The decay time τ is expressed through the two eigenvalues, λ/R and π/L such that:

$$1/\tau = D [(\lambda/R)^2 + (\pi/L)^2] \quad (3)$$

wherein D is the diffusion coefficient for silicon-self interstitials.

30 The expansion coefficient A in equation (2) is expressed through the imprinted interstitial concentration $C_{imp}=B(1-V/V_{cr})$, where B is about 0.5 such that:

$$A = 2.04 B (1 - V/V_{cr})$$

(4)

where the coefficient 2.04 is the product of the radial expansion coefficient 1.602 and the axial expansion coefficient $4/\pi=1.27$, v is the growth velocity and V_{cr} is the critical growth velocity.

Furthermore, a relationship exists between the growth velocity, the time the ingot dwells above the temperature of agglomeration, T_A , and the dwell length, L_{dw} , corresponding to the distance over which a given axial position travels as the ingot cools from near the solidification temperature to T_A . The relationship between this distance, or "dwell length" (L_{dw}), the growth velocity, v, and the dwell time, t_{dw} , is expressed as follows:

$$t_{dw} = L_{dw}/v.$$

(5)

To prevent the formation of agglomerated intrinsic point defects, the dwell time, t_{dw} , is preferably of sufficient duration to allow enough interstitials or vacancies to diffuse and be annihilated to sufficiently suppress the concentration thus preventing the formation of agglomerated intrinsic point defects as that portion of the ingot exceeds the dwell length and cools below the temperature of agglomeration.

The temperature profile in the hot zone of the crystal grower is believed to be almost unaffected by variations in the growth velocity, v, such that the dwell length, L_{dw} , may be considered as a constant for a given hot zone. Thus, the hot zone can be designed to provide the dwell length required to provide a sufficient dwell time based on a desired set of growth conditions, for example, the crystal diameter and growth rate.

Under steady growth processes, (ie. processes wherein the growth rate is controlled to produce an ingot which is predominantly interstitial rich or vacancy rich from center

to edge throughout the growth of the ingot) there exists a relationship between the dwell length, L_{dw} , the critical growth rate, V_{cr} , and the radius of the ingot, R , wherein for a given ingot radius and critical growth rate, there exist a 5 dwell length that will provide sufficient dwell time, t_{dw} , above the agglomeration temperature for the intrinsic point defects to diffuse to the surface of the ingot, suppressing the concentration and preventing the formation of agglomerated intrinsic point defects. The relationship is 10 expressed as follows:

$$L_{dw} = 0.35V_{cr}R^2 \quad (6)$$

The same requirement is applicable to ingots having a segment wherein the predominant intrinsic point defect alternates along the axis of the ingot between regions 15 wherein vacancies are the predominant intrinsic point defect and regions wherein silicon self-interstitials are the predominant intrinsic point defect. Provided the quantity of vacancies in the vacancy dominated regions is at least about the quantity of interstitials in the interstitial 20 dominated region to allow for recombination, there will exist an additional mechanism for suppressing the concentration, i.e., axial diffusion and recombination. Accordingly, the concentration of interstitials will be suppressed faster than an ingot relying predominantly on 25 radial diffusion. Stated differently, silicon-self interstitials in an interstitial dominated region having a radius equal to the radius, R , of the ingot and having vacancy dominated regions located along the axis of the ingot before and after the interstitial dominated region, 30 will diffuse from the region both axially and radially causing the concentration of silicon-self interstitials to be suppressed at a faster rate. That is, because the silicon-self interstitials near the axis can diffuse axially to the vacancy dominated regions, the maximum length in

which any silicon-self interstitial is required to travel before recombining and being eliminated is significantly reduced. To describe the diffusion rates and suppression of the interstitial concentration, the region can be 5 characterized as having an effective radius, R_{eff} , less than the actual radius, R of the ingot. The effective radius, R_{eff} , is generally less than the crystal radius and may be expressed a function of the ingot radius, R , and the axial length of the interstitial dominated region, bound along the 10 axis in the core region radially near and including the axis, by vacancy dominated regions, as follows:

$$R_{\text{eff}} = R / [1 + (\pi R / \lambda L)^2]^{1/2} \quad (7)$$

Thus, by substituting the effective radius, R_{eff} , for R in 15 equation (6), the required dwell length to prevent the agglomeration of intrinsic point defects may be determined.

For a considerable gain in the growth and cooling rate therefore, the length, $L_{\text{int.}}$, of an interstitial region, having a vacancy region both before and after the 20 interstitial region along the axis of the ingot, is preferably comparable to about twice the radius R (or less), such that R_{eff} becomes less than R , thus reducing the required dwell length according to equations (6) and (7) and correspondingly reducing the required dwell time, t_{dw} , 25 according to equation (5). Thus, an effective dwell time, $t_{\text{dw-eff.}}$, can be achieved which is less than about 85%, less than about 60%, less than about 40%, and even less than about 20% of the dwell time that would otherwise be required if the silicon self-interstitial atoms were to diffuse 30 primarily in the radial direction without the benefit of axial diffusion to suppress the concentration of silicon self-interstitial atoms.

To prevent the formation of agglomerated intrinsic point defects in interstitial dominant regions, the 35 normalized concentration of interstitials, C_i/C_m is

preferably suppressed below some critical value, $(C_i/C_m)_{cr}$ (equal to about 0.01 at $T_A=920^\circ C$). It follows from equations (2) through (4), that to suppress C_i/C_m below the critical level of $(C_i/C_m)_{cr}=0.01$ (at $T_A=920^\circ C$) the dwell time t_{dw} is

5 preferably long enough, to fulfill the condition:

$$Dt_{dw} [(\lambda/R)^2 + (p/L)^2] > \log [(1-V/V_{cr}) / (C_i/C_m)_{cr}] . \quad (8)$$

Accordingly, if the dwell time is specified (by a particular hot zone) then the required value of the length, $L_{int.}$, of the silicon self-interstitial dominant region may be

10 determined from equation (8) for a growth rate ratio, V/V_{cr} , producing a silicon self-interstitial dominant region. For

example, given a V/V_{cr} ratio of about 0.9, the right-hand part of equation (8) becomes about 1. Therefore, by knowing the radius, R , of the ingot and the dwell time, t_{dw} , of the crystal grower, the length, $L_{int.}$, of an interstitial dominant region may be determined such that the concentration of interstitials will be suppressed below the critical level of $(C_i/C_m)_{cr}=0.01$ (at $T_A=920^\circ C$) within the dwell time specified by the hot zone.

20 Ideally, the initial concentrations of vacancies in the vacancy dominant regions are sufficient to recombine with the silicon self interstitials, with the resulting vacancy concentrations being sufficiently suppressed to prevent agglomerated vacancies from forming as the ingot cools.

25 However, because the vacancies diffuse at rates substantially slower than silicon self-interstitials, as a practical matter, the concentration of the vacancy dominated region may not be suppressed sufficiently to prevent agglomerated vacancies. Furthermore, it is preferable that

30 the vacancy dominated regions contain an excess of vacancies over the quantity of vacancies required to combine with and annihilate silicon self interstitials to suppress the concentration of silicon self-interstitials. This excess

may result in agglomerated vacancies upon cooling below the agglomeration temperature.

The concentrations of vacancies and interstitials in each region are proportional to the growth rate ratios, 5 $(V/V_{cr})_{vacancy}$ and $V/V_{cr})_{interstitial}$. Accordingly, the minimum length ratio for the vacancy dominated region to the interstitial dominated region required to provide a quantity of vacancies equal to the number of silicon self interstitials, may be expressed in relation to the 10 normalized growth rate ratio such that:

$$[L_{vacancy}/L_{interstitial}]_{min} = 0.37 [(V/V_{cr})_{interstitial}/(V/V_{cr})_{vacancy}] \quad (9)$$

The growth rate during the formation of the vacancy regions may be any growth rate in excess of the critical growth rate without departing from the scope of the 15 invention. It is to be noted, however, that as the growth rate decreases, approaching the critical growth rate, i.e. the closer $(V/V_{cr})_{vacancy}$ gets to 1, the concentration of vacancies and typically the radius of the vacancy dominated region decreases, decreasing the total quantity of vacancies 20 available for recombination. According to equation (9), therefore, decreases in $(V/V_{cr})_{vacancy}$ causes increases in the required length of the vacancy dominated regions relative to the length of silicon self-interstitial region.

Correspondingly, as the growth rate increases, the 25 concentration of vacancies and typically the diameter of the vacancy dominated region increases, increasing the total quantity of vacancies available for recombination, thus decreasing the required length of the vacancy dominated regions relative to the length of silicon self-interstitial 30 dominated region. Preferably, therefore, the growth velocity is controlled during the formation of the vacancy dominated regions, such that the ratio $(V/V_{cr})_{vacancy}$ is at least about 1.5, more preferably at least about 2.0, more

preferably at least about 2.5 and may even be at least about 3.5 or greater depending on the particular hot zone design.

Conversely, as the growth velocity in the silicon self-interstitial region becomes closer to the critical growth velocity, i.e., the ratio $(V/V_{cr})_{interstitial}$ is increased, the concentration of silicon self-interstitials is reduced and, according to equation (9), $[L_{vac.}/L_{int.}]_{min}$ is reduced.

Preferably, during the growth of the silicon self-interstitial region, the growth velocity is controlled such that the ratio $(V/V_{cr})_{interstitial}$ is from about 0.5 to about 0.95, more preferably from about 0.7 to about 0.9, and most preferably from about 0.8 to about 0.9. Although slower growth velocities may be utilized without departing from the scope of the invention, as a practical matter, reduced growth velocities decrease the throughput of the crystal growth process and therefore are not desirable.

Additionally, as the growth velocity is decrease further below the critical growth velocity, the total quantity of silicon-self interstitials increases.

Preferably the vacancy dominated regions are as short as possible, with a greater total volume of the constant diameter portion of the ingot preferably being grown as silicon self-interstitial dominant material to improve the overall yield of substantially defect-free silicon.

However, it is also preferred that the total number of vacancies is at least about as much as the total number of silicon self-interstitials. Thus, it is preferred that the growth velocity is cycled asymmetrically about the critical growth velocity. That is, it is preferred that the growth velocity is increased to at least about 150 percent and as much as 350 percent of the critical growth rate during the formation of the vacancy dominated region while preferably being reduced to only about 90 percent of the critical growth rate during the formation of the interstitial dominated region.

Because interstitials diffuse faster than vacancies, the interface between the interstitial dominant region and the vacancy dominated regions will shift causing the resulting interstitial dominant region, substantially free 5 of agglomerated intrinsic point defects to have an axial length somewhat greater than $L_{int.}$. Preferably, the number of vacancies in the vacancy dominant region is in excess of the quantity of silicon self-interstitials in the interstitial dominant region. Accordingly, the length ratio, $[L_{vac.}/L_{int.}]$ 10 may be selected at some value greater than the minimum for a given set of growth velocities to provide an excess of vacancies.

In general, a silicon-single crystal may be grown by the Czochralski method to form an ingot having a central 15 axis, a seed-cone, an end-cone, a constant diameter portion between the seed-cone and the end-cone having a lateral surface, and a radius, R, extending from the central axis to the lateral surface. The radius, R, of the constant diameter portion of the ingot is preferably at least about 20 75 mm, at least about 100 mm and may even be at least about 150 mm or greater and has an axial length, L, of at least about 400 mm, at least about 600 mm, and may even be at least about 1000 mm or greater.

In accordance with the present invention, the ratio of 25 the growth velocity over the average axial temperature gradient, v/G_0 , is controlled to initially produce in the constant diameter portion of the ingot two or more regions, in which crystal lattice vacancies are the predominant intrinsic point defect, separated along the axis by one or 30 more regions, in which silicon self-interstitial atoms are the predominant intrinsic point defect by intentionally varying the ratio v/G_0 . In a preferred embodiment, the ratio is controlled by varying the growth velocity as discussed above.

35 In particular, the growth velocity is controlled such that the region or regions in which silicon self-

interstitial atoms are the predominant intrinsic point defect have an axial length of $L_{int.}$ which is less than twice the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot and has a radius $R_{int.}$ which extends across the entire radius, R , of the constant diameter portion of the ingot to take advantage of the axial diffusion and recombination of intrinsic point defects in the near axis region of the ingot. It is preferred that the ingot is grown under conditions in which a substantial portion of the ingot 10 comprises a region or regions in which silicon self-interstitial atoms are the predominant intrinsic point defects. Preferably, therefore, the axial length of the interstitial dominant regions, $L_{int.}$, is at least about 25% of the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot.

15 Preferably, therefore, the axial length, $L_{int.}$, of the interstitial dominant region is at least about 25% and less than about $2R$, at least about 50% and less than about $1.5R$, and preferably about equal to the radius, R , of the constant diameter portion of the ingot. The axial length, 20 $L_{int.}$, of the interstitial dominant region may exceed $2R$ or be less than 25% of R , however regions having an axial length greater than $2R$ will have increase diffusion times required to suppress the concentration of interstitials relying increasingly on radial diffusion from the axis to the 25 lateral surface, and regions having an axial length less than 25% may reduce the total volume of substantially defect free silicon in the ingot.

The growth rate is further controlled such that the regions in which crystal lattice vacancies are initially the 30 predominant intrinsic point defects have a radius, $R_{vac.}$, extending from the axis of the ingot towards the lateral surface which is at least about 10%, at least about 50%, and at least about 90% or greater of the radius, R , of the constant diameter portion of the crystal. The initial axial 35 length, $L_{vac.}$, of the vacancy dominated regions is preferably at least about 0.05 times the initial axial length, $L_{int.}$, of

the interstitial dominated regions and may be at least about 0.1, or even at least about 0.5 times the initial axial length, $L_{int.}$, of the interstitial dominated regions, depending on the ratio between the normalized growth rate 5 for the vacancy dominated regions and the normalized growth rate of the interstitial dominated regions as described in equation (9). For example, if $V_{vac.}$ is 1.5 times V_{cr} and $V_{int.}$ is 0.9 times V_{cr} then ($L_{vac.}/L_{int.}$) is preferably at least about 0.22. Similarly, if $V_{vac.}$ is 2 times V_{cr} and $V_{int.}$ is 0.9 times 10 V_{cr} then ($L_{vac.}/L_{int.}$) is preferably at least about 0.17; if $V_{vac.}$ is 2.5 times V_{cr} and $V_{int.}$ is 0.9 times V_{cr} then ($L_{vac.}/L_{int.}$) is preferably at least about 0.14; if $V_{vac.}$ is 1.5 times V_{cr} and $V_{int.}$ is 0.5 times V_{cr} then 15 ($L_{vac.}/L_{int.}$) is preferably at least about 0.12; if $V_{vac.}$ is 2 times V_{cr} and $V_{int.}$ is 0.5 times V_{cr} then ($L_{vac.}/L_{int.}$) is preferably at least about 0.1; and, if $V_{vac.}$ is 2.5 times V_{cr} and $V_{int.}$ is 0.5 times V_{cr} then 20 ($L_{vac.}/L_{int.}$) is preferably at least about 0.08.

Thus, according to the process of the present invention, the growth rate is preferably controlled to 25 initially produce in the constant diameter portion of the ingot at least about 2 vacancy dominated regions separated along the axial direction by at least 1 interstitial dominated regions. More preferably, the growth rate is controlled to initially produce in the constant diameter portion of the ingot, at least about 4, 6, 10, and even as many as 16 or greater vacancy dominated regions separated along the axis by one or more interstitial dominated region(s).

As noted above, the radius of the vacancy dominated 30 region(s) may be less than the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot. Additionally, vacancy dominated regions having a radius less than the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot, will generally have a silicon self-interstitial dominated region extending 35 radially inward from the lateral surface of the ingot to the vacancy dominated region. Thus, multiple vacancy dominated

regions may be separated along the axis of the ingot by a single continuous interstitial dominated region, having a radius that varies from a minimum approximately equal to the difference between the radius of the vacancy dominated 5 region and the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot to a maximum equal to the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot. For example, several vacancy dominated regions each having a radius equal to 10% of the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot may be 10 separated along the axis of the ingot by a single continuous interstitial dominated region, having a radius which varies between 90% and 100% of the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot, wherein the vacancy dominated regions are separated along the axis when the interstitial dominated 15 region has a radius equal to 100% of the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot. Alternatively, multiple vacancy dominated regions having a radius equal to the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot may be separated along the axis of the ingot by multiple 20 interstitial dominated regions each having a radius equal to the constant diameter portion of the ingot.

Therefore, according to the process of the present invention, the growth rate is preferably controlled to initially form in the ingot one or more interstitially 25 dominated regions separated along the axis by the vacancy dominated regions referred to above, wherein the interstitial dominated region(s) may be discontinuous regions completely separated along the axis by multiple vacancy regions having a radius equal to the constant 30 diameter portion of the ingot, or one or more continuous region(s) separate along the axis by multiple vacancy regions having a radius less than the radius of the constant diameter portion of the ingot. Thus, according to the present invention, the growth rate is controlled to 35 initially form 1 or more interstitially dominated regions having at least one vacancy dominated region axially

adjacent to the interstitially dominated region(s), the vacancy dominated regions serving as a sink to which silicon self-interstitials near the axis may diffuse and be annihilated.

5 The interstitial dominated regions are then cooled from the temperature of solidification at a rate which allows silicon self-interstitial atoms and vacancies from the regions to diffuse both radially and axially such that a sufficient number of silicon self-interstitial atoms
10 recombine with vacancies to reduce the concentration of silicon self-interstitial atoms in the region(s) in which silicon self-interstitial atoms were initially the predominant intrinsic point defect and to reduce the concentration of crystal lattice vacancies in the region(s)
15 in which crystal lattice vacancies were initially the predominant intrinsic point defect. Preferably, the regions are maintained at a temperature above T_A for a time period of at least an effective dwell time, $t_{dw\text{-eff.}}$, required to allow a sufficient quantity of silicon self-interstitial atoms to
20 diffuse to the surface of the ingot and to the vacancy dominated region(s) to suppress the concentration of silicon self-interstitial atoms in the region(s) in which silicon self-interstitial atoms were initially the predominant intrinsic point defect below a critical concentration
25 required for agglomerated intrinsic point defects to nucleate.

Once the concentration of interstitials in the region have been suppressed, the region may be cooled such that a significant portion of the resulting ingot is substantially
30 free of any agglomerated intrinsic point defects.

Depending upon the resulting concentration and distribution of vacancies and self-interstitial atoms in the various regions of the ingot, the formation of agglomerated intrinsic point defects may thereafter be avoided by
35 controlling the diffusion of the intrinsic point defects and/or by quench cooling the ingot. Thus, if the resulting

concentration of vacancies or silicon self-interstitials is below the concentration at which vacancies or silicon self-interstitials may agglomerate upon cooling, the region may be allowed to cool by the standard Czochralski process. If, 5 however the vacancy or interstitial dominated regions or portions thereof have vacancy or interstitial concentrations greater than the concentration at which the interstitials or vacancies may agglomerate upon cooling, the cooling rate of the region may be controlled such that additional time is 10 allowed for silicon self-interstitials and/or vacancies to diffuse radially to the lateral surface of the ingot and/or diffuse towards and recombine with each other further suppressing the concentration of vacancies and/or silicon self-interstitials during cooling such that the resulting 15 ingot is substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects (See for example co-pending United States Patent Application Numbers 09/344,036 and 09/344,709, both incorporated herein by reference.) Additionally, if the concentration of vacancies or silicon self-interstitials is 20 greater than the concentration at which the vacancies or silicon self-interstitials may agglomerate upon cooling, the ingot or portions thereof may be quench cooled such that the vacancies or silicon self-interstitials are effectively frozen in position without allowing sufficient time for them 25 to agglomerate, such that the resulting ingot is substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects as described in United States Application Number 09/661,745 claiming priority from Provisional Application Number 60/155,725 incorporated herein by reference.

30 Alternatively, the concentration of interstitials in the interstitial dominated region(s) may only be suppressed such that upon cooling, the region(s) contain some agglomerated interstitial type defects, wherein the agglomerated interstitial-type defects are B-type defects 35 only.

In general, control of the average axial temperature gradient, G_0 , may be achieved primarily through the design of the "hot zone" of the crystal puller, i.e. the graphite (or other materials) that makes up the heater, insulation, heat 5 and radiation shields, among other things. Although the design particulars may vary depending upon the make and model of the crystal puller, in general, G_0 may be controlled using any of the means currently known in the art for controlling heat transfer at the melt/solid interface, 10 including reflectors, radiation shields, purge tubes, light pipes, and heaters. In general, radial variations in G_0 are minimized by positioning such an apparatus within about one crystal diameter above the melt/solid interface. G_0 can be controlled further by adjusting the position of the 15 apparatus relative to the melt and crystal. This is accomplished either by adjusting the position of the apparatus in the hot zone, or by adjusting the position of the melt surface in the hot zone. In addition, when a heater is employed, G_0 may be further controlled by adjusting 20 the power supplied to the heater. Any, or all, of these methods can be used during a batch Czochralski process in which melt volume is depleted during the process.

Varying the growth rate during the growth of the portion of ingot typically referred to as the constant 25 diameter portion, i.e. the portion between the seed cone and the end cone, typically causes variations in the diameter along the axis. That is, the diameter of vacancy dominated regions is less than the diameter of interstitial dominated regions. As such, wafers sliced from the ingot having 30 reduced diameters will typically be vacancy dominated; wafers sliced from the ingot having increased diameters will typically be interstitial dominated. Accordingly, the diameter of the ingot and subsequently the diameter of wafers sliced from the ingot may be used to sort the 35 resulting wafers between those wafers having vacancies as the predominant intrinsic point defect, and those wafers

having silicon self-interstitials as the predominant intrinsic point defect.

Definitions

It is to be noted that, as used herein, the following phrases shall have the given meanings: "agglomerated intrinsic point defects" shall mean defects caused (i) by the reaction in which vacancies agglomerate or (ii) by the reaction in which self-interstitials agglomerate; "agglomerated vacancy defects" shall mean agglomerated vacancy point defects caused by the reaction in which crystal lattice vacancies agglomerate, examples include D-defects, flow pattern defects, gate oxide integrity defects, crystal originated particle defects, and crystal originated light point defects; "agglomerated interstitial defects" shall mean agglomerated intrinsic point defects caused by the reaction in which silicon self-interstitial atoms agglomerate to form A-defects (including dislocation loops and networks) and B-defects; "B-defects" shall mean agglomerated interstitial defects which are smaller than A-defect and which are capable of being dissolved if subjected to a heat treatment; "radius" shall mean the distance measured from a central axis to a circumferential edge of a single crystal silicon sample, such as a wafer, or an ingot slug or slab; "substantially free of agglomerated intrinsic point defects" shall mean a concentration of agglomerated defects which is less than the detection limit of these defects, which is currently about 10^4 defects/cm³; "vacancy dominated" and "self-interstitial dominated" shall mean material in which the intrinsic point defects are predominantly vacancies or self-interstitials, respectively; and, "visual detection of agglomerated intrinsic point defects," as well as variations thereof, shall refer to the detection of such defects using the naked eye under ordinary incandescent or fluorescent light sources, or optionally collimated or other enhanced light sources, and without the

use of any instrumentation which would otherwise aid in defect detection or result in defect magnification, such as optical or infrared microscopy, X-ray diffraction, or laser scattering.

5 Detection of Agglomerated Defects

Agglomerated defects may be detected by a number of different techniques. For example, flow pattern defects, or D-defects, are typically detected by preferentially etching the single crystal silicon sample in a Secco etch solution 10 for about 30 minutes, and then subjecting the sample to microscopic inspection. (see, e.g., H. Yamagishi et al., Semicond. Sci. Technol. 7, A135 (1992)). Although standard for the detection of agglomerated vacancy defects, this process may also be used to detect A-defects. When this 15 technique is used, such defects appear as large pits on the surface of the sample when present.

Additionally, agglomerated intrinsic point defects may be visually detected by decorating these defects with a metal capable of diffusing into the single crystal silicon 20 matrix upon the application of heat. Specifically, single crystal silicon samples, such as wafers, slugs or slabs, may be visually inspected for the presence of such defects by first coating a surface of the sample with a composition containing a metal capable of decorating these defects, such 25 as a concentrated solution of copper nitrate. The coated sample is then heated to a temperature between about 900°C and about 1000°C for about 5 minutes to about 15 minutes in order to diffuse the metal into the sample. The heat treated sample is then cooled to room temperature, thus 30 causing the metal to become critically supersaturated and precipitate at sites within the sample matrix at which defects are present.

After cooling, the sample is first subjected to a non-defect delineating etch, in order to remove surface residue 35 and precipitants, by treating the sample with a bright etch

solution for about 8 to about 12 minutes. A typical bright etch solution comprises about 55 percent nitric acid (70% solution by weight), about 20 percent hydrofluoric acid (49% solution by weight), and about 25 percent hydrochloric acid 5 (concentrated solution).

The sample is then rinsed with deionized water and subjected to a second etching step by immersing the sample in, or treating it with, a Secco or Wright etch solution for about 35 to about 55 minutes. Typically, the sample will be 10 etched using a Secco etch solution comprising about a 1:2 ratio of 0.15 M potassium dichromate and hydrofluoric acid (49% solution by weight). This etching step acts to reveal, or delineate, agglomerated defects which may be present.

In an alternative embodiment of this "defect 15 decoration" process, the single crystal silicon sample is subjected to a thermal anneal prior to the application of the metal-containing composition. Typically, the sample is heated to a temperature ranging from about 850 °C to about 950 °C for about 3 hours to about 5 hours. This embodiment 20 is particularly preferred for purposes of detecting B-type silicon self-interstitial agglomerated defects. Without being held to a particular theory, it is generally believed that this thermal treatment acts to stabilize and grow B-defects, such that they may be more easily decorated and 25 detected.

Agglomerated vacancy defects may also be detected using laser scattering techniques, such as laser scattering tomography, which typically have a lower defect density detection limit than other etching techniques.

30 In general, regions of interstitial and vacancy dominated material free of agglomerated defects can be distinguished from each other and from material containing agglomerated defects by the copper decoration technique described above. Regions of defect-free interstitial 35 dominated material contain no decorated features revealed by the etching whereas regions of defect-free vacancy dominated

material (prior to a high-temperature oxygen nuclei dissolution treatment as described above) contain small etch pits due to copper decoration of the oxygen nuclei.

In view of the above, it will be seen that the several objects of the invention are achieved. As various changes could be made in the above-described process without departing from the scope of the invention, it is intended that all matters contained in the above description be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense. In addition, when introducing elements of the present invention or the preferred embodiment(s) thereof, the articles "a," "an," "the" and "said" are intended to mean that there are one or more of the elements. The terms "comprising," "including" and "having" are intended to be inclusive and mean that there may be additional elements other than the listed elements.